Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

saw, 1882). Mr. Gepp writes that the Czechs have two modified "l's," this one being printed by the Poles like a "t" with the cross oblique, and it is this modified "l" which has given rise to the transcription "Chatubinskia."

17 ST. MATTHEWS PARADE, NORTHAMPTON, ENGLAND.

THE AMERICAN RED CROSS WANTS INFORMATION[1]

Regarding Supplies of Surgical Sphagnum

GEORGE E. NICHOLS

Sphagnum moss is being used by the Allied armies on an enormous scale as a substitute for absorbent cotton in surgical dressings. The British are using nearly 1,000,000 sphagnum dressings every month. The Canadian Red Cross is making over 200,000 per month. The American Red Cross, in March, 1918, officially adopted sphagnum as a standard dressing material, and it is now being used in many American military hospitals.

As yet, for various reasons, the number of sphagnum dressings that is being called for in this country is comparatively small. The raw material from which these are being made is secured mainly from the Pacific Northwest, where there are large supplies of excellent moss. But it is anticipated that at any moment the call may come for the American Red Cross to furnish sphagnum dressings in immense quantities. In order to be able to do this, raw material must be available in large amounts. Where are we going to get it? To be sure, there is an abundance of it in the Pacific Northwest. But our eastern chapters must not be compelled to depend on this: transportation is too uncertain and too expensive.

Here is the problem! Unquestionably, there is plenty of good surgical sphagnum to supply our needs right here in the east. But there is this difficulty: Until very recently the surgical value of sphagnum was not realized in this country, although it has been used in Germany since 1880. Consequently, nobody has searched for it particularly. Hence, while we know that there is plenty of it scattered about here and there throughout much of the east, we do not know (except for a limited number of localities) where to place our hands on it. Our problem, then, is to locate definitely as many good sources of supply for surgical sphagnum as is possible. And we must do it now! When the demand comes for sphagnum dressings in vast quantities, we must be prepared to provide the goods at once. It will be too late then to start in exploring.

Can you help? There may be enough good moss in your neighborhood to at least satisfy your local needs. You may even find enough to warrant the collection of raw material for shipment to less favored communities. You can only find out by prospecting. Locate the bogs and explore them.

Here are a few pointers. Surgical sphagnum commonly is very local in its occurrence. It grows in bogs, but may be absent from nine out of every ten. The tenth bog may be full of it. Wet, quaky bogs, open and mossy or with scattered grasses and bushes, are best. Dry, firm bogs, bushy or wooded, are least favorable.

---

[1] *See* note, bottom p. 84.

What we want now, then, is information. Do not attempt to collect material in bulk at this time, but do collect good, generous samples of representative material and submit them to us for examination. We want accurate and reliable information regarding the location, size, and accessibility to roads of every bog that contains surgical moss, and regarding the quality, purity, and amount of the material present.

NOTES ON SURGICAL SPHAGNUM

How to recognize sphagnum moss—Sphagnum is one of the largest of the mosses. Like all mosses, a sphagnum plant consists of stem, leaves, and "roots." Its distinguishing characters are as follows: (1) Color—pale green when wet, nearly white when dry; or commonly some shade of red, pink, yellow or brown; never a true leaf-green. (2) Plant consists of a main stem which bears many branches. Branches are short and grow scattered along the stem, standing out from it at right angles. Toward the tip of the stem they are clustered, forming a compact rosette. (3) Leaves are very small, almost scale-like, and more or less spoon-shaped.

Where the sphagnum grows—Sphagnum may grow in any swamp, but the best quality grows in bogs. A bog is a peculiar type of swamp, which often develops in wet, undrained depressions or around the edges of ponds. Its surface is commonly quaking. Its vegetation differs from that of ordinary swamps in the abundance of cranberries and other "heaths," and usually of pitcher plants and black spruce, and in the luxuriant development of the sphagnum mosses.

How to distinguish surgical from non-surgical sphagnum—Only a few of the forty kinds of sphagnum found in this country are of surgical value. Examine the sphagnums in almost any bog and you will find two quite distinct classes. Class I: Plants comparatively robust, with stout branches and large leaves. Class II: Plants comparatively delicate, with more slender branches and smaller leaves. Only the sphagnums of Class I are of surgical value. There are four important species in this class: *Sphagnum papillosum*, *S. palustre*, *S. magellanicum*, and *S. imbricatum*. These are of value in the order named. They can be distinguished from one another roughly by color. *S. papillosum*, by far the best one, may be green, but ordinarily it is brownish—from yellow-brown to dark brown. It is never pink or purple. *S. palustre* is usually a pale greenish-white. *S. magellanicum* may be green, but commonly it is pink to purple-red. *S. imbricatum* is usually green. Note: the sphagnums of Class II exhibit similar variation in color, so that color alone cannot be relied on.

When growing under certain conditions, any of the four sphagnums named may be too stiff-stemmed, too sparsely branched, or too thinly leaved to be of surgical value. The three species last named are ordinarily useless on this account. But growing under other conditions any of the four may be soft-stemmed, closely branched ("bushy"), and densely leaved. Material like this is best for surgical work, and it is largely because it commonly has this habit that *S. papillosum* holds the place of first importance. It is only in very wet places and under exceptionally favorable conditions that the other three sphagnums acquire the soft, bushy habit.

How to prepare sphagnum samples for assay purposes—First of all, in collecting select a characteristic specimen: one that really is a fair sample of the area of moss that it is intended to represent. Try to include only one kind of sphagnum in each sample—don't get a mixture. Pull up a good, generous double-handful, pick out any "weeds," squeeze out the water, and wrap it up in a piece of newspaper. Tag the package with a number, so that you will know just where it came from. Collect plenty of samples from different areas, and make each one good and big—it will be as light as a feather when dry, parcel post rates are low, and large samples are easier to judge than small ones. When you get it home, loosen each bunch up with your fingers and spread it out in the air to dry. When nearly or quite dry, separate each sample into two lots and ship one of these to headquarters for examination, keeping the other (numbered in duplicate) for reference. For mailing, samples can be wrapped in newspaper or wrapping paper.

Send for a sample of surgical moss, if you are in any doubt as to what to look for. Specimens for examination can be sent to George E. Nichols, Botanical Adviser on Sphagnum, Yale University, New Haven, Conn.

POROTRICHUM NOT THAMNOBRYUM

ELIZABETH G. BRITTON

In the May BRYOLOGIST, Professor Chamberlain records the changes proposed by Dr. Nieuwland[1] for the genus *Thamnium* Br. & Sch.

The truth of the matter is that there is no need for another generic name, as *Porotrichum* (Brid.) Mitt. is quite sufficient for both groups of species. It is a refinement of *hair-splitting* to attempt to separate so large and characteristic a genus, which may be recognized by macroscopic characters, on microscopic differences in the markings of the teeth, *which do not hold constant!* Anyone who has studied the key and illustrations given by *Brotherus*[2] and then turned to the genus *Porotrichum* and found that the key breaks down in various ways, will realize that it is a most troublesome and needless separation of a perfectly natural group of species, which furthermore are most generally found sterile. Braithwaite[3] says: "This large genus of 175 species appears to connect the *Hypnaceæ* with *Neckeraceæ*, having the peristome of the former, but the habit and aerolation of the latter. The newer name *Thamnium* cannot be main-

---

[1] J. A. Nieuwland. Critical Notes on New and Old Genera of Plants—X. Am. Midl. Nat. **3**: 50–51. 1917.

[2] Teeth of the outer peristome striate. 51. *Thamnium*.
Teeth of the outer peristome papillose or striate only below. 47. *Porotrichum*.
Engler & Prantl. Pfl. fam. fasc. 226, p. 852, 859. 1906, figs. 629–633.

[3] British Moss-flora **3**: 197. 1903.